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HARVARD UNIVERSITY
JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138



September 10, 1990

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Albert Wood
Office of Naval Research
Arlington, VA 22217-5000

From: Ronald A. Heifetz

Re: Final Technical Report for Contract N00014-85-K-0884

This contract provided initial funding for two large projects. The first consists of the development of a practical political and organizational leadership theory, along with its documentation. The second consists of an application of this theory to the problem of crisis leadership in the nuclear context.

The first project has proceeded slowly but steadily and with success. The second project reached a plateau due to changes in the international arena and lack of sufficient opportunity and funding to test the crisis leadership model.

The first project has consisted of two parts: 1) efforts to develop and document a leadership theory, and 2) testing the theory in mid-career and executive programs at the John F. Kennedy School of Government for its applicability to the practice of public affairs. 180-7

I. Theory Building

A. Theory development: Our understanding and conceptualization of leadership, authority, and the adaptive dynamics of social systems has deepened significantly from this research. The language we are using to describe and provide guidance for the exercise of leadership and authority is far more incisive than the language we had been using at the time of initial funding in the fall of 1985. This development can be observed by comparing two different documents written three years apart with the support of this contract: 1) "Political Leadership: Managing the Public's Problem Solving," in The Power of Public Ideas, R. Reich, ed. (written in 1986, published by Ballinger in 1988, Harvard University Press, 1990); and 2) "Teaching and Assessing Leadership Courses at the John F. Kennedy School of Government," Heifetz, et al., Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, Summer, 1989.

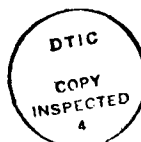
In addition to these two publications, we undertook a rigorous clarification of the definitional framework of our leadership theory. This effort took the form of a paper entitled: "Training Leaders for Government: A Theoretical Framework for Explaining the Complications of Leadership." Modeled after a geometry text, we define and explain the logical relationship among the definitions, postulates, and propositions of the theory. This research has given us much greater purchase on the structure and internal consistency of our leadership framework.

B. Testing: In 1985, we began the first phase in an ongoing research effort to assess the usefulness and relevance of our theory of leadership. The results were published in "Teaching and Assessing Leadership Courses at the John F. Kennedy School of Government," Heifetz, et al., Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, Summer, 1989. Briefly, we performed a large survey of professional students one and a half years after returning to work. The results were encouraging. The majority of executive and mid-career students stated: 1) that the concepts and skills taught in these courses were "critically relevant" to the exercise of leadership in their jobs, and 2) that the leadership courses proved to be "much more useful" than both the rest of their courses at Harvard and their previous leadership training. This included military flag officers from all four services.

II. Nuclear Crisis Leadership

The second project proposed in the contract was the application of leadership theory to the problem of crisis, and in particular, potentially nuclear crisis. We wrote the draft of a paper on presidential leadership during a potentially nuclear crisis, which set forth an orienting framework for crisis leadership, as well as an outline for a crisis leadership training module.

The initial trial of a variant on the crisis leadership training module was given in collaboration of William L. Ury to a group of senior business executives. This did not prove fruitful. What we needed were opportunities to test out the ideas and teaching method with a more relevant group. Subsequently, plans to test out the module on military officers, either under the auspices of ONR, or in our executive programs for flag officers, did not come to fruition. In addition, as the political landscape in the Soviet Union began to change significantly, the demand for this thinking seemed to diminish. As a result, the manuscript is left unfinished. Because the ideas still have relevance, both in regard to crises per se and in regard to nuclear possibilities, we do hope to return to this research in the future.



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